

# Christianity and Crisis

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## The Peril of War and the Prospects of Peace

THERE can be no question but that the MacArthur Senatorial hearings have had a most salutary effect upon European estimates of our steadiness in bearing the main responsibilities in the present world situation. Up to the time of these hearings it was a favorite theme of the European press, as indeed of Asiatic opinion, to picture MacArthur as the symbol of America's inclination to take undue risks. The general feeling in Europe was that we were more interested in winning a war which, according to European thought, no one could win; and which should therefore be avoided. European opinion, even when highly critical of America, seems now ready to concede that our American leaders are more circumspect than they had believed. Journals such as *The New Statesman and Nation* are a little hard put, because they pictured MacArthur as the real power behind the throne in America. But generally the dismissal of MacArthur without a serious political crisis has not only reassured our European friends about the sanity of our foreign policy but also about the stability of our democratic institutions.

Yet one note of suspicion remains. Europeans wonder whether we will have the wisdom to survive the crisis, which they expect in about 1953. The crisis they expect will be reached when the tremendous exertions of our rearmament program will have reached their culmination. We will have expended billions and will have taxed ourselves to a limit never before achieved in America. We will at that point, according to our European friends, look into the future and wonder how many years we must sustain such burdens. Our military strategists will remind themselves that the rate of obsolescence of the very costly weapons of modern warfare is very rapid. It is not possible, therefore, simply to keep weapons in storage for a future eventuality.

The question which our friends in Europe ask is, whether we might not be tempted in this moment to

heighten the crisis between East and West in such a way that the issue will be joined at a time which seems most propitious to our strategists. They suggest that it would not be necessary to embark upon a "preventive" war, which no democratic nation would probably ever do. At least it would not be a preventive war in an explicit sense. It might nevertheless represent a "failure of nerve" on the part of America.

In an interesting analysis by Miss Hafkesprink on the attitude of the German people before the First World War, she established that many who opposed the war nevertheless experienced a kind of relaxation of tension when the war came, preferring a known evil to unknown future perils. This we must admit, reveals not a German but a human weakness. It reveals the kind of moral weakness against which we must contend.

There is good reason to believe that, though the Russians will give us many uneasy moments in coming years, they will probably refuse to join the ultimate issue. They could of course stumble into the war by some miscalculation. There is, therefore, a good prospect for an uneasy peace for a long while to come. But it will be uneasy; and it will require a great sacrifice of treasure as well as peace of mind.

Such a "long pull" will not be an easy task for a nation which entered upon the turbulent waters of international responsibility only a decade ago; which is not accustomed to frustration; and which has regarded expanding, rather than contracting, historic possibilities as its God-given right. It will be the more difficult because the burdens to be borne demand certain disciplines, including the rationing of scarce materials, to which every nation of Europe is accustomed but which seem viable in America only in actual war.

There is probably no moral peril, faced by the nation to which the preaching of the Gospel is more relevant than this peril, induced by our possible im-

patience. We will not overcome it if we are too sure of our virtue. We must heed the Gospel warning: "If any may stand let him take heed lest he fall." We will not overcome it if we demand too immediate and too obvious historical success for any right social policy. A nation must of course have some prospects of success. If there were not a real chance of avoiding war, these sacrifices would become intolerable. But if we ask for immediate success we will blow up in frustration. Even nations (though no nation can be "Christian" in the final sense of that word) must have some inkling of the trans-historical realities of the kingdom of God. Otherwise they will fail in their

historical endeavors because they demand too immediate historical success. Finally a very powerful nation must always be reminded that no man or nation, however wise or powerful, has a right to play God to history. That means that we must not pretend to read the future and insist that unless our problem is solved in this or that year, it cannot be solved.

We do not know how the Communist tyranny will disintegrate or when; nor how it might lose its virulence. We do know that the consequences of an atomic conflict are so terrible that no one has a right to prefer its calculable destruction to an incalculable future.—R.N.

## The Gospel for a Day of Dilemma

CLARENCE KILDE

THESE are days when people go about with an undercurrent of disappointment and even distress in their souls. Persons of official capacity who move about the country admit the war in Korea is an unpopular war. We respond to the draft call grudgingly, we enlist in the armed services to avoid the draft call and therefore enlist half-heartedly. There is much self-pity in homes where sons are growing up to draft age. We complain about our higher taxes and grudgingly pay them. In the call for blood donations to the Red Cross blood bank for Korea, the nation as a whole has fallen far short of the quota. In communities contiguous to Camps and Training Centers we are painfully slow in responding to the support of reactivated USO centers. When, and if, shortages come, there will be a new crescendo of grumbling. And to make matters worse, the editorial policies of many of the slick magazines, to say nothing of the McCormick and Hearst press keep egging us on to be more disgruntled than ever. The war in Korea is superficially blamed upon what they call an inept administration and a bungling State Department. Being a Democracy we are free to voice our disgruntled feelings wherever and however we wish. So the enemy takes heart and adopts a policy of watchful waiting in a war of nerves in the hope of wearing us down. Throwing parliamentary monkey wrenches in the U.N., exercising the veto, calling for the floor to tack on amendments, calling for armistice talks, prolonging debate, making endless false accusations, calling for apologies, broadcasting innuendoes and exaggerations, the ene-

my with all the time in the world keeps procrastinating every decision in order to aggravate our disgruntled feelings concerning a war we do not want. The enemy is gambling on a hunch that we in America love our comfort so much that eventually we'll revolt against supporting any longer an unpopular war.

Now it can be tragic if the Communist dictatorship underestimates the will to win that is ever latent in free peoples. It would be fatal for everyone if World War III were started on the assumption the people of the Democracies are too soft in moral deterioration to stand up to the onslaught. Rather the real reason for the unpopularity of this war with so many Americans can best be explained by our American psychology, in that being a nation of engineers, efficiency experts, technicians, we are impatient to get things over with, we want to finish the business and go home.

But this is a different kind of war, with a different kind of people. It is different because this is not just a war over real estate, resources and markets, it is a war of ideology, whether in Europe or Asia. It is also a different kind of war in that we are dealing with non-Caucasians, and that we characteristically impatient Americans are going to have to learn the patience required to play international politics with Slav and Mongol. In oriental psychology life is cheap, and they are more concerned with saving face than saving lives. This calls for a more shrewd diplomacy. And it calls for a more patient diplomacy for the concept of time differs in oriental and occi-

dental psychology. And we must not be beguiled by distance. For those who have fought close at hand, whether in diplomacy or in combat, know how ruthless is Slav and Mongol, especially when indoctrinated by fanatical and godless Communist ideology.

If this be true, then it ought be a more popular war, for to lose it would mean losing everything we hold dear, our 2,000 year old heritage of the sacredness of personality, and the equality of all men before God, which is the ground of all our freedoms.

So we ought not confuse ourselves by forgetting our objectives. Nor ought we permit the purely political editorials of slick magazines and the tabloid press to deliberately cloud the issues in order to make us forget our objectives.

Why did we go into Korea? Not to conquer a country, certainly not to exploit their rice paddies, not even to drive out anyone we did not like. We went in for the sole reason of stopping aggression. We went into Korea for the same reason we went into Greece with military aid and for the same reason we went into Berlin on the air lift to fight the Russian blockade. Our major concern is stopping aggression in the gamble it will stave off World War III.

If this be so, then this is a second reason why this ought be a more popular war. For if by many little wars we prevent the all-out war, we are saving America from the unspeakable and costly chaos of atomic warfare.

To be sure, this prolonged kind of conflict with no definite terminus called victory, will mean much boredom among the rank and file in the armed services. There will be more than usual of what Tolstoy in *WAR AND PEACE* referred to as compulsory idleness. It will be difficult for many to see any relationship between what they are doing and the national defense or the winning of the peace. Part of our problem lies in the fact that the bitterness in our lives because our personal plans are disrupted by the draft, that the grudging giving of our tax monies, and the gloomy manner in which we face all the compulsions incidental to the national defense and the winning of the peace is but the betrayal of our failure to see clearly the nature of Communism and to understand the nature of the conflict of our times.

As a matter of fact, our perennial peril lies not so much in the possibility of our being confused but rather in the temptation of preferring to be confused rather than face the hard facts. The pathos of our plight lies in the fact we prefer only superficial and sentimental answers and we selfishly seek to escape both our national guilt and the burden of hard decisions by laying it all on some scapegoat. Precisely on this, our pathetic weakness, McCarthyism thrives.

On the contrary, mature Americans who have

come of age in reference to the nature of the enemy and the nature of the conflict of our times have a realistic recognition of this towering fact, no one now living will see anything different in our lifetime. Given the nature of the enemy, and the issues in the conflict, there will be no cessation of aggression, or cessation of threats of aggression, in the foreseeable future. National defense, involving both the military and industrial production, is with us for an unpredictable duration. The beginning of wisdom is to make peace with the fact, there will be no peace. There will only be what St. Augustine called "an uneasy armistice."

For in the view of classic Christianity with its doctrine of the nature of man, prone to sin in his selfishness, but prone also to sacrificial living for he was made in the image of God, therefore, temptation and tension, strife and sacrifice, is the lot of man. And there can be no guarantee of permanent peace, only uneasy armistice.

The convinced and Biblically-enlightened Christian ought certainly to have no illusions about some of the profounder aspects of the present conflict. To be sure, Russian imperialism is more diabolical and ruthless because its atheism perverts its pretension to social justice and brings on a slavery more sinister to society than mere economic slavery. But that must not for us eclipse the fact that the imperialism of the West has also been a corrupting force because of misuse of power. The fierce hatreds in the present conflict, especially in Asia, stem from 19th century colonial policies of exploitation, which policies in some areas are still clung to with a determination that is detrimental to the more informed policies of the West. The seeds of exploitation sown in the 19th century became the harvest of hatred in the 20th century.

Thus, once again the descriptions of life found in the Bible are being verified. "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Ezekiel 18:2). "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation" (Exodus 20:5). "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

All of this brings us up against the dilemma of our day. Now the nature of a dilemma in logic is that escape which is completely satisfactory is impossible. This is the meaning of dilemma, that we are dissatisfied with either direction in which we must move in an attempt to solve the problem. The essence of the tragedy of our day arising from our dilemma is that whatever we do is evil.

This is the dilemma of the Christian. Whereas Communism glorifies the use of force, endows force



with a messianic mission, Democracy on the other hand deplores the use of force and postpones the act of violence as long as possible. At the same time, collectively we of the democracies are in part the occasion for the force let loose upon us. Our national interests are both the victim of aggression and the occasion of aggression. For we who are Christian, therefore, it is never enough to deplore war but we can never escape the judgment there is no such thing as a purely righteous war. This is in particular the sin of the Roman Catholic Church when it invites the Protestant Church to join in a Holy War against godless Communism. Because the situation is not so simple, therefore, there is no such thing as a Holy War. So this is one side of the dilemma, the Christian's reluctance to resort to war because of moral sensibilities nurtured by the Christian religion, and added to this a feeling of guilt because of the sense of our sinfulness at the point of national interests.

Then there is the other side of the dilemma, namely, if Communism based on force, that is, declaring the necessity of violence as integral to Communist ideology, then can we meet this social force in any other way except by diplomacy through strength, preparation for war, and with a will stop aggression at its inception? Granted that war is hateful to Christian people, yet are we free to jeopardize the life and liberty of people who look to us and depend upon us for the same? Can we with impunity do so without eventually jeopardizing our own pursuit of life, liberty and happiness? Certainly we have had enough experience with placating or appeasing aggressors by pretensions to neutrality, expressions of pacifism and appeals to reconciliation to know that these become the very stuff of encouragement to aggression. To do so now again would prove how short is social memory and betray ignorance of the very nature of Communism which coupled with Russian imperialism nurtures occasions for violence in the cynical philosophy the end justifies the means. The question is not, can we stop Communism, bound up with Russian imperialism, by some other way than preparation for war because war is inevitable both in their ideology and on their timetable. The only thing that will deter them is a very real fear they cannot win.

Thus the dilemma drives home the fact we have only a choice between two evils, namely, war is deplorable and Communism is repulsive. These terrible alternatives admit no easy answer. We hate war but our heritage is at stake if we are not fully prepared for war. In short, we must risk war for the sake of possible peace.

This then is the gospel for a day of dilemma in our international life, given the kind of a world in which we live, evil on occasion must be bound by

evil. When God called Isaiah to be his prophet Isaiah could only begin by saying, "I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6:5). Being sinners in a world of sin, we cannot escape the paradox which rises out of our dilemma, confessing our Christian faith we yet must needs participate in evil to put bounds upon evil. And this is the Christian revelation within the Gospel, only in proportion as we seek God's forgiveness while doing so will we be saved from being corrupted by the very evil in which we are compelled by evil to participate.

One thing more must always be said, while we who carry the name Christian prepare for the worst we must work increasingly and incessantly for the best. Christians must remember there are also Christians behind the Iron Curtain and beyond the 38th Parallel. The Spirit of God is not bound. So Christians go on praying for Christians across all boundaries, and undergirding that prayer with gifts of charity. To be sure, because of Nationalism the church is also a broken earthly vessel, but by God's help it can contain the Spirit of Christ which is charity. By contributing financially more than ever before to Our Christian World Mission and never wearying of well-doing continue sending food parcels and boxes of clothing do we tangibly and glowingly testify that the only thing that can leap boundaries of nations, race, creed, color is the mind, enlightened by the Christian gospel of good will which declares that one God and Father of all mankind "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26). In our day of dilemma this is the gospel of hope, the endless possibilities of unpredictable peace in the midst of perennially predictable war.

### **Evangelism Chief Concern Of Hungarian Church Conferences**

Evangelism and Bible study have been the main features of a series of summer conferences held by Protestant Churches in various parts of Hungary this summer. Pastors and their wives and other church workers from all parishes have attended the conferences organized by the Hungarian Reformed Church. Special attention was given to the task of leading children into experience of the Christian faith, according to the Hungarian Church Press Service. Gatherings convened by the Hungarian Lutheran Church included "quiet weeks," and district conferences. At one of the Hungarian Baptist conferences held at the "Bethesda" mission retreat on the shores of Lake Balaton, a special study course was given and sermons were preached on various aspects of St. Paul's apostolic mission. Hungarian Methodist Church leaders report that they are personally conducting the training of pastors and holding conferences on youth work.—*Ecumenical Press Service, Geneva.*

# Narcotics Addiction

HUGH HOSTETLER

**I**N spite of the often bizarre, sensational tone to the stories, the American press has rightly given large amounts of space to the rapid rise in the use of narcotics by young people. The phenomenon is one of the most tragic aspects of contemporary city life.

## I.

Teen-age usage of habit-forming drugs has increased 900 per cent since 1946 and has tripled in the past two years alone. At the U. S. Public Health Service hospital in Lexington, Kentucky, the only public hospital in the country adequately equipped to care for drug addicts, 18 per cent of the addicts treated in 1950 were under 21 years of age; in 1946, only 3 per cent were minors. In New York City, commitments to city correctional institutions on charges of narcotics violations will have jumped from 1031 in 1950 to an estimated 2400 for 1951. A special committee appointed by Mayor Impellitteri to study narcotics usage estimated in June, 1951, that there were 90,000 addicts and users in New York City alone. The incomplete but telling data from other large cities throughout the nation reveal proportionately much the same story. Because of the clandestine nature of usage, it is of course impossible to obtain accurate figures as to exactly how many narcotics addicts and users of various degrees there are at the present time. But the force of evidence available through the courts, hospitals and from various social agencies adds up to a shocking rise which no longer could be kept *sub rosa* from the public.

Teen-age addiction is to be found among every social and economic group. There are primarily two reasons why people take drugs: To "escape," and for a "new thrill." Adults and some teen-agers generally take narcotics to "escape" or to forget their inner troubles and can "feel normal" only when under the influence of drugs. Teen-agers, ever on the lookout for something new for a thrill, have turned to drugs while usually ignorant of their fateful consequences. Now it is obvious that psychological needs to escape and for new thrills will be most prevalent among young people who suffer economic and social penalization. Broken homes, unemployment, low wages, low educational levels, a disorganized community spirit and moral codes of their own characterize depressed areas and are background factors that drive teen-agers to using drugs and concomitantly to crime for money to obtain drugs. It is thus somewhat understandable, if

the more deplorable, that probably over one-half of East Harlem's young people use or have used marijuana (the usual entree into the drug habit); and that the area may rightfully be classed as the most heavily doped in the country.

There is another aspect of drug addiction that deserves our thorough scrutiny. Narcotics sales have become a huge and profitable illicit business dominated by vile underworld characters so ably exposed by the Kefauver committee. Their "business tactics" are of the foulest sort and run true to all illicit forms. Yet if existing narcotics laws in most states were truly enforced the trade would dry up to relatively minor proportions; it certainly could not have reached its present epidemic stage. Most narcotics activities occur in depressed areas (though they are by no means limited exclusively there); East Harlem was called "the dope (selling) center of the United States" in testimony to the Kefauver committee. The brunt of narcotics law enforcement must necessarily fall upon local city, county and state forces. Any police force must have the goodwill and cooperation of the people it serves if it is to do a job effectively. It is here the catch lies in policing slum areas. By and large there exist fear, suspicion and hostility between the people and the police. To illustrate the point, teen-agers in East Harlem feel they do not dare turn in names of dope peddlers to the police fearing they will be held in turn and "shaken down" by beatings as they have experienced on other occasions. Both teen-agers and adults alike have no respect for the honesty of the police force; they see numbers policy men permitted to operate every day on their blocks because certain enforcement officers have been paid off. "Money will buy anything"—including narcotics racket protection—is the cynical observation that arises daily in depressed areas. And it would be blind foolishness for those "on the outside" to seriously minimize the truth of this observation.

## II.

No more unambiguous moral issue has confronted the churches in recent times than the narcotics trade to young people; in rightful indignation we can say that it is wrong to sell and use narcotic drugs, and in full conscience we can participate in the struggle to eradicate the evil. One has only to hear the story of two or three young addicts to confirm this. Drug addiction is a one-way street to hellish slavery from which there is no escape unaided. Unlike alcohol for most people, one cannot "take it or leave it" with narcotic drugs (marijuana excepted). Rightfully the churches are now beginning to ask how they may aid. The following are some immediate steps they should take or aid:

1. A straightforward educational campaign through public schools and church groups aimed at taking the glamor and sociability out of this "new thrill" will go a long way towards stopping its spread. It is best to fortify all our young people with full knowledge of the evils of the habit; a youth who would use dope while mindful of its consequences would find other very anti-social patterns anyway if dope were not available. A play called "Dope" put on outdoors five consecutive nights by the East Harlem Protestant Parish last spring proved the value of teaching a community the evil consequences of drugs.

2. Obviously active demands from church groups for more adequate law enforcement are in order. In some states new laws will have to be written, others altered, in order to facilitate the job of apprehension and determination of guilt.

3. Addicts are sick persons and should be treated as such. Too often they are viewed as criminals (some addicts of course do become criminals in order to obtain drug supplies), and the churches should use their influence towards changing this mind-set. Special public long-term treatment facilities are desperately needed particularly for our large cities. State-wide petitions circulated among churches calling for such care centers certainly seem in order.

4. There is the additional job of rehabilitation to be done. Finding jobs, a long step back towards a more normal life, is particularly difficult for most ex-addicts. Also they have to find new social patterns after being cut off from family and community during the period of addiction. Sincere good works in these directions by church groups are perfectly in order.

### III.

Over and beyond the above very necessary immediate steps, our Protestant churches must address themselves to several embarrassingly deep questions brought to the surface by the narcotics problem but inherent in a great many other concurrent evil situations as well.

Ever since the great abortive furor over Prohibition the churches have been extremely cautious about entering the political arena with a united front on a moral issue; "no more burned fingers" seems to have been the motto since then, and permissive attitudes towards a host of moral problems have dominated the churches' thinking. Even the morally unambiguous question of racial segregation has evoked no united political front excepting limited local actions. Not all clear moral issues carry the same lustre as campaign material of course; the prospect of losing an occasional scotch and soda during Prohibition was far easier for the average layman to take than is the possibility today of having

to eat in the same restaurant with a colored person. And the term "united front" must needs have always a relative connotation. Yet a campaign such as that ensuing over Prohibition had one great virtue: It taught laymen and clergy alike that American Protestantism had a lot of political weight to throw around when united around an issue.

It is the height of folly to suggest that another "moralistic campaign" be whipped up simply for its didactic value, though our generation could well profit from the lesson! But that is not the point. All political issues are eventually moral issues, and morality must in turn find political expression. No political situation has ever been very free from corruption, but today's picture here in America seems particularly bad. The findings of the Kefauver and Fulbright committees alone, revealing how gambling, narcotics and extortionist mobs are corrupting public servants, present a moral issue the churches should be able to attack vigorously with a large measure of unanimity. And the stake involved is too great to allow us the luxury of the past quarter century of permissiveness ("after all, who does the right thing all the time, anyway?"), or of cautious refusal to campaign for honest office holders and would-be holders. Perhaps the need and the desire for "moralistic campaigns" go in cycles, withdrawal periods being necessary to remind our collective selves that God holds the final answers and not we before we can return to new battles. The political situation today seems to justify a "return" after our period of withdrawal.

### IV.

Protestant churches can best guard themselves against self-defeating moralistic endeavors through a continuous attack on the conditions behind specific moral issues. The urgency for immediate action on narcotics should not blind us to the fact that this is but one manifestation among many of deep-seated crises afflicting our cities and to a lesser extent our whole culture. The very life of an individual is being squeezed out of him and he must depend upon externals (for some narcotics is the newest of these) to overcome the void within. Our cities are cess-pools of both loneliness and rebellion; an individual must share most of his daily existence with everyone else, yet can share his real inner self with few if any. Economic and social depravation accentuate this process to the point where a person must turn his individual destiny into "no destiny" if he is to survive at all. The emergence of this type of mass man, product of recent history, is hardly a debatable "moral issue"; rather it is a fact to which the church must speak and act.

Under the impact of the times the churches have begun to inject some badly needed personal warmth



and piety into their life stream. Like inoculations, these practices should preserve the existing church bodies against fatal assaults from our contemporary culture. However if Protestant churches wish to influence our public affairs in far greater measure than they now do (and many of us so desire), they will have to learn first to accept as such the masses

inhabiting our urban centers, who by and large now acknowledge no formal religious faith, then win them over and lead them to a new destiny. With such a huge and humbling task squarely centered in the life of the churches, campaigns against gambling and narcotics racketeers, and for better government, make much more sense.

## The World Church: News and Notes

### Power and Policy

After the Second World War the United States quickly discovered that there was no part of the world, not even Europe herself, that could be safely left to the care of other nations. Against their deepest instincts the American people were forced to accept a responsibility for which they had no adequate preparation. They have used it with unparalleled generosity and forbearance.

The immediate stimulus which brought this about was the challenge of the Soviet Union in Europe. . . . When a way has been found in which Germany may make her contribution to a European army and enjoy once more equality of rights within the European community, the United States may look forward to the day when the task has been carried out, when the "perilous gap" in Europe's defenses has been closed, when a state of peace by negotiation from equal strength becomes possible and Europe can be left to look after herself.

Unfortunately, long before the end of this work was in sight, the United States was forced to intervene in Asia. Once again it was a Communist challenge—in China, Korea, and (faced already by the French in Indo-China and the British in Malaya) southeast Asia—that made this necessary and once again the United States responded with immense energy. It cannot be said that American policy in Asia has worked out so well. For this there are several reasons. To the majority of Asian peoples—underrating no doubt the Russian threat, which in Asia is not open or direct—it is not a simple question of Communism versus Freedom or even of Communism versus Capitalism. They seek first, freedom from what they regard as Western imperialism and equality with the Western nations and, secondly, a new social order within their own communities. In both these struggles Communism, which it is the American business to combat by all means and with any willing allies, often appears a friend rather than the real enemy to independence. This conflict of approach has been made much worse by the Korean war and China's aggressive intervention. . . . Of the three great Asiatic nations, China is deliberately and bitterly hostile, India is coolly neutral, while only Japan can be counted on as a strong supporter of American policy—and that only because it is temporarily in her interests to be so. There is no Pacific pact, no Asiatic organization for economic construction, and no sign at all yet that the present position would remain stable if American power were withdrawn. Policy here so far offers no relief.

On the whole the desires and interests of Europe and America coincide. They share many of the same beliefs and institutions; their social structure is not dissimilar; they recognize a common enemy. This is the true basis of the Atlantic Pact and all that is needed to complete it is a slightly greater effort by the nations of Europe and a slightly more flexible approach by the United States. In Asia, Africa, and the Middle East on the other hand, vast populations with other religions and cultures, having a far lower standard of life and at a quite different stage of development, have to find their own way forward. They must be protected and guided by the Western Powers, but it cannot be assumed that what is good for London or Paris is good for Shanghai or Calcutta. In the long run the nations of Asia and the Middle East will value their freedom more—and be more ready to seek help to defend it—when they feel that it is their own choice. And in the short run an immense responsibility, which can be discharged in the end only by great wisdom as well as great power, rests upon American shoulders.—Excerpt from the *London Times*, August 29, 1951.

### Decker Sees Secularism As Chief Obstacle in Latin America

"Secularism is the one great obstacle that stands in the way of evangelical advance in Latin America," according to Dr. John W. Decker of the International Missionary Council, who returned to New York, September 24, following a two month trip to twelve countries of Latin America. The countries visited included Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Panama, Peru, Puerto Rico, Trinidad, and Uruguay. Dr. Decker described the continent of South America as "a vast frontier area, whose greatest days lie ahead."

Dr. Decker expressed himself as "amazed" at the relative unimportance of the Roman Catholic Church, as an obstacle to evangelical work. Secularism and potential Communism, rather than Roman Catholicism, he feels, are the problems to be faced by the comparatively small but intensely vital evangelical movement.

"An agenzizing spiritual vacuum is prevalent in much of Latin America. The widespread apostasy from Rome is well known. In many cases, Romanism's deadly successor has been secularism. Uruguay is probably the most secular state on the globe. The spiritual vacuum

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which exists is one reason—though not the only one—for the 3000 people we found jammed into a Pentecostal service on a Sunday morning in Santiago, Chile. We were told that this church would be full every evening of the week."

Serious laxness or lack of moral standards is one evidence of this spiritual vacuum, Dr. Decker said. Marital infidelity is widespread, and dishonesty a major problem.

"This spiritual vacuum cries to be filled," said Dr. Decker, "and it will be filled with something. This is sufficient justification for our evangelical work in Latin

America, if any special justification is needed. It is both our challenge and our opportunity."

Dr. Decker said his greatest surprise on this, his first trip to Latin America, was the discovery that political Roman Catholicism was not more of a problem, at least at the national level, in most of those countries which he visited. (He excepted Puerto Rico, Cuba and probably Peru.) National governments could not, he said, always control local action, particularly in isolated areas.

In Argentina, he reported, the Catholic Church had had high hopes of special favors, in return for support of the new political order there. But now the opinion is widely expressed that "the honeymoon is over."

In regard to Communism, Dr. Decker said he had been told by many reliable persons that the virtual outlawry of Communism in several countries had only driven the menace underground, and this had resulted in a deceptive calm. Communism, has its strength on the one hand among the students and intelligentsia, and on the other hand among the depressed and underprivileged, fostered by the fact that there are a few rich, but many desperately poor in most of these lands.

In Rio, for instance, Dr. Decker reported, the sparkling modern city is marred by poverty-stricken "favellas" (slums) that have crawled up on the high ridges that lace the city and are considered uninhabitable by its more favored citizens. Here, often without running water or sewage facilities, the poor people come and build their squatters' shacks. Public facilities follow slowly. The "favellas" of Rio are notable because, being built on high ground, they cannot be hidden, as slums usually are. But such grinding poverty and unsightly hovels are all too prevalent in most of Latin America.

The "hacienda," or great estate, is a feature of life in rural Latin America, according to Dr. Decker. "There seems to be no lack of land," he reported, "but a large percentage of the rural dwellers are landless tenants. It does not serve too much purpose for mission schools to teach farmers better farming methods if all decisions about the farm must be made by the landlord." Dr. Decker said he agreed with the United States delegate to UNESCO who urged "that land reform on a global scale be made a basic program of the United Nations in order to create peace and stability."

Dr. Decker said that although one friendly national had said "One thing is certain; we do not need or want North Americans to come here to lecture us about Communism," he had received constant and urgent invitations from indigenous church leaders to do exactly that. He said the people were very anxious to hear what he could tell them, as a representative of the International Missionary Council, as to what was happening to Christianity under Communism in China and Korea.—*Ecumenical Press Service*, New York.

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